

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 466
By Patton

A RESOLUTION to honor Mr. G. Robert Owens on the occasion
of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body recognize those who in their years of work have performed with extraordinary dedication and unprecedented devotion; and

WHEREAS, G. Robert Owens is one such outstanding person who has served with alacrity and acuity for nearly 40 years with Watauga Mental Health Services, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, he was the third person to be employed by the organization and has served as Watauga's top executive since 1962; and

WHEREAS, Bob Owens' professional accomplishments include initiating the first adult day treatment program in the state, the first functional comprehensive mental health center, and the first satellite center, opened in Elizabethton in 1969; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, Mr. Owens oversaw the opening of a 33-bed freestanding inpatient psychiatric unit, which in 1985 was moved to a modern 75-bed facility known as Woodridge Hospital, providing services to substance abusers and the mentally ill; and

WHEREAS, during Bob Owens' remarkable tenure at Watauga, a therapeutic nursery, vocational rehabilitation program and therapeutic foster care program have been added to the continuum of services offered; and

WHEREAS, he has also played an integral role in the expansion of psychological assessment services at Watauga, attracting such clients as the local school systems,

correctional facilities, hospitals, private industry, social security disability and law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, to provide for a safe living environment for Watauga's clients, Bob Owens oversaw the acquisition and staffing of group homes, independent living apartments and respite care for the chronically mentally ill; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, twenty-four crisis response services were implemented thanks in large part to Bob Owens' foresight; his ties with local academicians led to the development of a program of training for psychiatric residents from the Quillen College of Medicine at East Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, Bob Owens exemplifies the spirit and dedication that is characteristic of a great Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, he is an active and vital part of the community and his profession, serving with acumen on the board of directors of First American Bank, the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare, Washington County Council for Retarded Children and Adults, Washington County Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Washington County Health Council of the Community Health Agency, TNNET, Dawn of Hope and Rocky Mount; and

WHEREAS, Bob Owens served with probity as president of the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Centers in 1967 and 1977. He is a regional member of the board of directors of the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Centers, a past president of the Upper East Tennessee Council of Social Services, and past chairman of the local sub-chapter of the National Association of Social Workers; and

WHEREAS, he is on the faculty at the James H. Quillen College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, and was president of the Johnson City/Washington County Chamber of Commerce in 1987; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Owens has received several professional honors, including the distinguished Presidential Award for Outstanding Contributions in Mental Health Administration, and is a two-time recipient of the Tennessee Governor's Outstanding Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, Bob Owens evinces his faith at the First Christian Church in Johnson City, of which he previously served as chairman of the congregation and board of deacons and elders; and

WHEREAS, his many honors and accolades aside, Bob Owens is most appreciative of the love and support he shares with his wife, the former Janie Hardage, and their two daughters, Anna and Jan; and

WHEREAS, Owens' adroit qualities include the uncommon ability to motivate others to fully realize their potential, perhaps the most valuable of all skills; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we extend to Mr. G. Robert Owens our best wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and continued success in future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Mr. Owens, with this final clause omitted from such copy.